

COMMENTS ABOUT THE MARANATHA AD

March 18, 2012 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

Following are some comments we have received about the Maranatha Baptist College promotional ad that we mentioned in Friday News Notes this week.

Some people stated their opinion that it is just innocent fun and that I need to “lighten up” and stop being so “picky” and some of those (but not all) rebuked me for my “legalistic, hateful” comments. Those representing this opinion would probably form the majority view among IFBaptists today.

Following is an example of this from a Maranatha graduate:

“There is so much that I could say to you right now about hurting the gospel with your site and the cutting words that you write. But all I will say right now is that I pray that you see what you're doing is wrong, that you realize our focus in life should be worshiping God not putting down those whom we don't agree with a hundred percent. Your words hurt. I'm a Maranatha grad. And my husband and I are trying to serve God with every ounce of our being. We read the ESV and we use contemporary music to worship our God. I didn't always believe like that, when I was growing up I was in a church that is very alike to the churches on your directory. But stepping away from that type of living showed me how much that type of Christianity lives in a ‘under the law’ type of way and how everything is done ‘the old fashioned way’ because that's the ‘right’ way. My husband and I have decided to stop living that way and just do simply and only what the bible says and what the bible communicates. I hope and pray from the bottom of my heart that you will stop this hating of other people who were saved by the same blood you were saved by and who are worshiping the same God you worship.”

If a school uses the critical Bible text, it is not surprising that its graduates use the English Standard Version, and if a school plays around with the music issue, treating it lightly, it is no wonder that its graduates love contemporary worship music.

Here is another example:

“Don't you have better things to do with your time than to sit around and act like some kind of lunatic with your blogging super powers? There are greater problems in this world than those of your obstructed fubiementalistic bubble. Your vengeance on those who partake in banality such as "southern Gospel rap" should be aimed at your own stupidity and debaseness. Might I say that it is people like you that have driven a man that finds fault in such institutions of stupidity and mediocrity to different avenues of Christianity in hopes that not all of sinful mankind are not as stulid as you are...”

I'm not sure what fubiementalistic is, but one thing is certain, this fellow is an expert on the issue of being "stulid."

Others who responded after viewing the video, such as the following, expressed that they are disturbed at what they saw and they believe that it represents something dangerous.

I enjoy life and appreciate innocent fun, but this promotional video is much more than mere fun. It represents a wrong attitude, a wrong philosophy, a wrong trend, a wrong direction. It represents a conformity to the world.

Remember, friends, this is not just a little dorm ditty that some students put together while goofing around. It is a promotional video intended to represent the Bible College.

In the 40 years of my Christian life, I have witnessed the amazing spectacle of the widespread collapse of separatism among fundamental Baptists. Never have independent fundamental Baptist churches been in more spiritual danger, and never have they been more careless and ill prepared to face the danger, generally speaking. It's time to wake up! It's especially time for pastors to wake up!

The collapse has effected churches, schools, fellowships, associations, and none of the individual collapses started with "big" errors. If the devil can introduce just a little leaven of compromise that is ignored by the Lord's people, this is sufficient for his purposes, because he knows better than most believers that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

(See the free illustrated eBook *Biblical Separatism and Its Collapse*, which is available at the Way of Life web site.)

Some men charged me with sinning against Maranatha by not talking to them directly instead of publishing a public report. This is a red herring. The fact is that the school was contacted about the matter more than a week before I published my report. I knew, for example, that the chairman of the board had been contacted.

Further, this was not a private matter. The video was not something just thrown together by some students. It was a promotional video produced with faculty participation and approval and published on the internet for the whole world to see. It is a very public matter.

But with many Independent fundamental Baptists it is business as usual. Shoot the messenger. Attack the reprover. Change the subject. Confuse the issue. Misuse Scripture (e.g., Matthew 18). Trivialize the serious.

Maranatha has the right to publish whatever they please. And I have a right before God and man to express a comment about what they publish. Anyone is free to disagree with my comments. In

fact, each individual is responsible to test what I am saying by God's Word, and that is exactly what I ask and expect of my readers. That is the spiritual approach and attitude.

But no one has the right to browbeat me for expressing a biblically-informed opinion on a public matter.

I am not just some individual taking cheap pot shots. As of 2012 I have been studying the Bible, preaching, and researching for 40 years. My level of Bible knowledge is evident by the fact that I am the author of such things as the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* and Bible commentaries and a Bible School curriculum. When it comes to contemporary Christian issues, I certainly qualify as an expert. I am as well informed about New Evangelicalism, Charismaticism, Modern Versionism, apologetics, contemporary Christian music, modern praise, the Emerging church, and such things as any IFBaptist preacher alive. I can name other men who have done something like the level of research I have done, but it is exceedingly rare. For example, most IFBaptists, when they talk about something like the emerging church, have only a vague idea what it is. In contrast, my two books on the emerging church, totaling nearly 800 pages, are based on reading more than 150 of their own books, visiting many of the most influential emerging churches, attending with press credentials one of the most influential emerging conferences, and personally interviewing some of the big-name emerging leaders.

My enemies will doubtless say I am bragging. The Lord knows that is not true. I am simply describing my credentials and reminding my readers what I "bring to the table."

The fact that I am a serious Bible student and researcher and veteran church planter does not mean I am right in all of my judgments. It *does* mean that I should be treated with godly respect and given a prayerful hearing.

To browbeat a man for expressing a biblically-informed opinion on a public matter is an expression of carnality, spiritual immaturity, and man-centeredness, and those are three of the fundamental roots of the problem we are facing today in the collapse of separatism.

COMMENTS FROM READERS

Following are further comments about the Maranatha ad, most of which are by pastors. A couple of these comments were not in reply to my report and were not written to me in particular but were written by men who had viewed the video before I mentioned it in Friday News and who were discussing the issue among themselves.

"Bro Cloud, you have done a good job in simply laying out some facts. ... I have been saved and in the ministry for 29 years, pastoring at the same church for 17 years, and the longer I go, the less I know. ... I guess we are becoming the 'old guys' that are just jerks. Well I'm good with that, so long as I don't disappoint my Lord."

“I have watched many of these colleges go down the road of no return. I appreciate you standing up and naming names as you do, Brother Cloud.”

“I watched the Maranatha promotional video and you are absolutely right about it. It's worldly and has no place in a Baptist college. This is a college that is supposed to be training leaders for Christian service, ministry, etc. Unfortunately, the fact that the school felt the need and the liberty to produce such a promotion reveals a deeper problem with what are supposed to be good churches. There is too much worldliness and compromise in good churches, and it is getting worse, even in my own church. Not in the leadership, but you can see it in the membership, which grieves me and my wife deeply. Brother Cloud, keep preaching what you're preaching. You are NOT nitpicking. I am of the opinion that how you preach and what you preach was pretty common back in the 40s and 50s and before, and, frankly, is the way preaching should be today. I say that because it's true, not because I am a ‘David Cloud disciple,’ which I am not. Keep preaching and don't change what you're doing. We're praying for you.”

“I agree with you. Although you have stated some facts about Hyles Anderson college and Trinity College and Dr. Lee Robertson's Church and College, it was hurtful to know. Facts are facts. We know that many once great institutions have left their first love. ... Little foxes that spoil the vines have crept in. Is it any wonder that the field is still white unto harvest?”

“After 56 years in ministry I have seen some great changes away from the Fundamentals of The Faith Once Delivered. There is hardly a Christian Educational Institution existing today that has not left The Truth. In the last 20 years they have dropped like dead flies into apostasy. Using the expressions ‘just kidding’ or ‘just having fun’ when it comes to biblical principle and Truth is a step towards heresy. I have spoken, over the years, in churches from Maine to California, from Alaska to Florida, and in that time most churches that have sound doctrinal statements have revised their statements or their present ‘belief’ or lifestyle is in rejection of their statements. Dr. Charles Woodbridge used to say: ‘Tolerance of error leads to compromise with error, then agreement and finally a personal walk in error.’ How true that was then and also is now. So, take the heat and stay faithful. Your friend in Christ and for His eternal Truth.”

“Thank you for the warning about Maranatha Baptist College. It is very disappointing that they chose this worldly path. I am no longer recommend this college to anyone. Thanks!!”

“Thank you for the warning. May the LORD encourage your heart today. I am SO disappointed to see Maranatha striving to promote their school with ‘cool’ videos and ‘new school theology.’ It is just so discouraging. I had thought that Maranatha had headed back a little bit in the right direction in recent years. This is most distressing to me.”

“I listened to the Maranatha College ad BEFORE reading your article and so was not looking for profanity; however it sounded like they used profanity to me. In any any event my Mac computer

dictionary says profanity includes - '*..irreligious or irreverent behaviour.*' That pretty well makes the whole ad - '*...profanity.*'"

"Thank you, Brother Cloud, for publishing your comments regarding my Alma Mater. My wife and I are both graduates of the school. The promo video was sent to me a couple of weeks ago; we watched it and then sent a response to the current president who should know better. I also sent my response to other MBBC grads who are some of my supporting pastors. If I lose support, well, so be it. I'm not sure I want support from churches like that anyway. What you have said is accurate to the T. Don't be disheartened by the attacks of the contemporary crowd. I have seen the slip and slide even of many of the earlier graduates, and it breaks my heart. When I have confronted them, I am made to look like the fool even though I have held the same positions for three decades. I'm not the one who has changed and neither are you; they are the ones, and they will answer for that. This promo is certainly NOT avoiding the appearance of evil, something which Dr. Cedarholm often would preach against in chapel."

"Seems to me that in the cafeteria scene I hear the young, cool dude comment on the steak, saying either, '**** good,' or 'Man, good!' or 'Ummmmman good.' I cannot be sure which it is."

"As we viewed the video we understood him to say an inappropriate word as he was eating his steak. It sounded, to us, like he said 'good, **** good.' The entire video was upsetting to us ... We backed it up and listened at least four times to that section and came up with the same thing each time?"

"I was turned off by the cool shades, the pop culture/yuppie attitude, the long haired guy with the puppet (in the group), and especially the gyrations of the faculty. My wife was in the kitchen fixing breakfast, didn't know what I was doing, and asked me to turn that music off because it was bothering her! I have to explain that I was researching something, rather than just listening to it. I also thought I heard a profanity in the video."

"If these students and faculty members were walking in the Spirit then I certainly have missed something along life's way regarding Bible truth. Are they trying to appeal to the carnally-minded or to the spiritually-minded?!! It's disgusting."

"After watching the video, I thought this is just the kind of stuff that is extremely harmful for a Bible College to be doing. It looked worldly, sounded worldly, and was worldly! Why would any Godly parent wish to send their children to a place like this? After being on the campus before I realized that so this is not just a 'recent thing' with the school. ... If they post it on the Internet for the world to see they are going to receive scrutiny. The argument that if something is out in the public venue and you should not comment on it I think is silly. Every person has a right to an opinion. You saw what you saw and commented on it. I appreciate what you had to say and it again shows why we are in the position on separation we are in today."

“What bothered me was not only the attempt of a ‘punk’ appearance of the fellows in the video, but even more so the faculty members who were ‘jiving’ and literally swinging to the music. It is one thing for college kids to generate this sort of thing on their own, even in a fundamental college. But it is another thing for the college administration to officially put their imprimatur upon it which the head honchos at MBBC clearly did. I knew the Cedarholms personally on several levels. They would roll over in the graves if they saw that video.”

“As I have thought about it, the various schools which are falling by the wayside all began with the same issue: the Bible text. Maranatha has not officially become a critical text school, but their faculty sure is.”

“The article today about Maranatha seriously disturbed us. We have not supported the school but one of our relatives is voting on the ‘star’ of this video this coming Sunday. Their church is considering calling him as their youth pastor. They watched the video and are heartsick.”

“They are obviously trying to appeal to a different crowd of people. This is what happens to Bible colleges that really want to be liberal arts schools.”

“I just listen to the video, and when the guy was eating steak; I heard ‘**** Good’ and I think what bothers me is they really look like the world.”

“It’s a reason the rappers are popular. Even when they’re not swearing, it sounds like they are. It’s confusion, but to the new generation, it’s cool, man!”

“If you read his lips, it sounds like the audio does not match the video at that point. It is like there was some tricky editing going on or something. I was thinking the same thing before you sent this correction.”

“I spoke to the chairman of the board about it yesterday. I told him that it is unnecessarily offensive to MBBC’s conservative constituency.”

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